

her: Zola, his young wife, his aged mother, now in very indifferent health, and his dog, a cross "between a sheep-dog and a Newfoundland, — in a word the faithful Mathieu, of whose last years and death the novelist afterwards wrote so pathetically in "*La Joie de Vivre.*" A servant-woman, who slept out, attended to the harder and dirtier house-work ; Madame Zola the younger took charge of most of the cooking; and it was amid these conditions, in this little pavilion behind No. 14, Rue de La Condamine, that the young author, who had but lately completed his twenty-ninth year, resolutely set to work upon one of the greatest literary efforts ever made, one which not only embraced a most painstaking study of \_ a period and its people, but imported into fiction, for the first time in its history, virtually every application of the scientific theory of atavism.

Thus Zola gave effect to his old desire to try to reconcile science and poetry — which he had only recently enunciated once more in an article in "*La Tribune.*" And in the prosecution of this self-chosen task over a long term of years, amid many difficulties, the greatest ridicule, the most impudent misrepresentation, the most savage abuse that every white-livered critic could think of, he did not once swerve from the view he expressed in "*Le*

Gaulois " about the time when he was signing his contract with Lacroix: " If I kept a school of morals I would hasten to place ' Madame Bovary' or ' Germinie Lacerteux' in my pupils' hands, convinced as I am that only truth can instruct and fortify generous souls."<sup>1</sup>

That view remained Zola's till his last hour. Early in the summer of 1869 he handed the opening

<sup>1</sup> "Le aaulois," Maycli 26, 1869.